

CHAPTER 6

HEBREWS—SECTION 1

I. SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST, Ch. 1-7

A. *Superiority over the OT prophets, 1:1-4*

v.1 Spoke to prophets

No greeting

Πολυμερῶς *polumeros*, by many portions, piecemeal

πολυτρόπως *polutropos*, by many ways: revelation, history, dreams, visions

Having spoken by the prophets—divine inspiration; parallel to “by the Son” in v. 2

πάλαι *palai*, long ago; now is time for new revelation

v.2 “At the last of these days” = “in these last days”

LXX for אַחֲרֵי יָמֵי מְשִׁיחִים *be'acharith hayyamim* (Westcott, *et.al*); Messianic times (Kent 35-36)

“A Son” – quality of sonship (better than NIV “his Son”; KJV has “*his* Son”)

vv. 2-3

7-fold description of Christ:

1) Heir of all things (cf. Ps 2:8; Heb 1:5)

2) Through whom he made the ages = world in 11:3

3) Radiance (ἀπαύγασμα *hapaugasma*; *hapax*—effulgence) of the glory

4) Representation of his essence (or nature, ὑπόστασις *hypostasis*)

χαρακτήρ *charakter*, *hapax*: imprint, image, related to χάραγμα *charagma* in Acts 17:21; cf. Col 1:15, image (εἰκών *eikon*) of God

5) Bearing all things by the word of his power (Col 1:17)

Dods *EGT*: cf. LXX Num 11:14, govern & guide, as Moses “carrying” the Israelites

6) Having made purification of sins

Text var. {B}: having made (by himself) purification; idea included in middle voice of ποιησάμενος *poiesamenos*

7) He sat at the right hand of the majesty in high

Verb to go with ὅς *hos* in v. 3

Majesty = God; 8:1

Sit there, 1:13; Jesus quotes Ps 110:1 in Matt 22:43-44

Matthew 22:43-44 ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,
⁴⁴“The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.””

v. 4 Transition verse to angels

“Better” 14 times in Hebrews

κρείττων *kreitton*

Refers to exaltation after incarnation? Or after ascension? Cf. Phil 2:9-11; Rom 1:4

B. Superiority over angels, 1:5 - ch. 2

1. Superiority over the angels shown by the OT, 1:5-14

Note how Hebrews identifies the Son with the OT Messiah

Ch. 1 quotes OT 7 times, 6 times from Psalms

v. 5a (Ps 2:7)

David the author, Acts 4:25-26

Applied to his resurrection in Acts 13:33

Therefore, “begotten” = inauguration; Rom 1:4

v. 5b (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13)

Solomon in 1 Chronicles, but can apply to Messiah in 2 Sam 7:13, 16

v. 6 (Deut 32:43 LXX & DSS; not in MT; Ps 97:7)

Division of opinion on “again,” *πάλιν palin*:

(1) Refers to another passage, as 1:5; 2:13 (KJV, RSV, NIV)

(2) Refers to second coming of Messiah (ASV, NASB)

Position of *palin* and ὅταν *hotan* with the subjunctive (future time) show angelic worship of Christ at second advent (cf. Matt 13:41; 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7)

Firstborn; Ps 89:29; cf. Isa 14:30; Col 1:15, 18

v. 7 (Ps 104:4)

Parallelism: πνεύματα *pneumata* - winds (cf. John 3:8; Rev 7:1)

vv. 8-9 (Ps 45:6-7)

Two persons called God:

— “O God”—vocative

—v. 9, God is God of Jesus (John 20:17)

vv. 10-12 (Ps 102:25-27)

Messiah is Creator, and will outlast creation

“You are the same” (cf. Heb 13:8)

Ps 102 is messianic

Verses 13, 16 – Messiah is being spoken of because “he is the coming one who will show mercy to Zion” (Kent 45)

Cf. vv. 1, 12 – “Lord” in LXX = Messiah

“Lord” in v. 10 in LXX – agrees with vv. 1, 12

v. 13 (Ps 110:1)

Already used in Heb 1:3

Jesus quotes in Matt 22:43-45, noting David as author

Foot on neck; cf. Behistun Inscription of Darius I the Great

v. 14 Concluding comparison to angels

Salvation still future, Rom 13:11

2. Superiority over the angels resulting in more severe warnings, 2:1-4 (Warning #1)

v. 1, Drift by

Cf. προσέχω *prosecho* (“pay close attention”), used for bringing ship into dock

We might drift by παραρρέω *pararreo* (“drift away”), perhaps referring to profession, not regeneration, but probably apostasy

v. 2, Punishment in OT

Word spoken through angels—Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19; cf. Deut 33:2 “holy ones” (LXX “at his right hand were angels with him”); also Ps 68:17 KJV; “angels” not in NASB, NIV

Acts 7:53, “you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”

Gal 3:19, “What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.”

vv. 3-4, Present duty

Spoken through the Lord
Confirmed by eyewitnesses
Testified to by signs & gifts of the Holy Spirit

“Of the Holy Spirit”—subjective or objective?

Subjective probably, 1 Cor 12:11

Gifts given by all three persons (Pink):

Father, 1 Cor 7:17
Son, Eph 4:7
Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 12:11

3. Superiority over the angels in spite of his humiliation, 2:5-18

a. Humiliation of humanity, 2:5-9

v. 5, Subjected the world to come (superiority of the Messiah)

Temporary angelic superiority; cf. 2:2; Dan 10:13, 20-21

Superiority only temporary, 1 Cor 6:1-3; Rev 20:6

vv. 6-8a

Quotes Ps 8:5-7 LXX

Ps 8:5 MT “gods”; LXX “angels”

v. 7, βραχύ *brachu*, a little time, space, degree

v. 8b, We do not see it so now

v. 9, τόν *ton* = Jesus (first appearance of Jesus' name in Hebrews)

γεύσεται *geusetai*, he might taste, experience, Acts 10:10 = "eat," not "sip"

**This idea of suffering leading to glory is a major theme of the book of Hebrews.

b. Humiliation of suffering, 2:10-18

v. 10, Cf. Col 1:16-17; here, the Father

ἀρχηγός *archegos*: originator, Heb 12:2; "pioneer" (RSV), "founder" (ESV), Acts 5:31;
Heb 6:20

"To make perfect" as the author of salvation; superior to the angels

v. 11, All of one:

Father, Luke 3:23, 38
Holy Spirit, Luke 1:35; John 3:5
or of humanity, Acts 17:26 (Adam)

vv. 12-13, Three OT quotes show Messiah's affinity with man:

(1) v. 12 (Ps 22:22), messianic psalm

Ps 22:22, I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the congregation I will praise you.

(2) v. 13a (Isa 8:17 LXX), Isaiah typifying Christ; "I" emphasized: he shares our faith

(3) v. 13b (Isa 8:18)

Isa 8:17-18,
I will wait for the LORD,
who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob.
I will put my trust in him.
Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and
symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.

F. F. Bruce: passages relate to Father hiding his face

vv. 14-16, Messiah's sufferings destroy the devil

v. 14, Blood & flesh

This order: Eph 6:12 & here; physical substance

v. 15, Power of death, Eph 6:12; Col 1:13; 1 John 2:9-11; 3: 12, 14

v. 16, ἐπιλαμβάνεται *epilambanetai*, "take hold"

Matt 14:31, Peter in water

Cf. Isa 41:8-9

No article with seed; also John 8:33; descendants of Abraham, Christians (as in Rom. 4:11)

vv. 17-18, Messiah's sufferings qualify for high priest (taken up in ch. 5)

C. Superiority over Moses, ch. 3-4

1. Comparison with Moses, 3:1-6

v. 1, Titles for Christ:

"Apostle," only use for Jesus in the NT; cf. John 3:34; 5:36-37; 20:21

"High priest," introduced in 2:17

v. 2, ποιήσαντι *poiesanti*, appointed; same as LXX 1 Sam 12:6 (ASV)

Num 12:7; Moses faithful in his [God's] house = OT church

vv. 3-4, Christ built the house

Has more glory than the house

Moses a part of the house, in the house, vv. 2, 5

Notice that Moses serves in same house over which Christ is now ruling (the church); this indicates that Hebrews considers the OT and NT saints to belong to the same body.

vv. 5-6, Christ the Son, Moses the servant (θεράπων *therapon*, *hapax*; higher than a slave, δοῦλος *doulos*)

ἐάν *ean* + subjunctive, possible-probable; prepares for warnings

2. Greater warning than that of Moses, 3:7 - 4:13 (Warning #2)

—Theme of “rest”

3:7-11, Quote from Ps 95:7-11

v. 7, Quotes Holy Spirit (4:7 = David), “wherefore . . . take care (v. 12)”

Σήμερον *semeron*, today: “The psalmist, in giving his warning to his own generation by the Spirit’s inspiration, regarded it as still a possibility for men to come to a place of pleasing God and of enjoying the salvation He provides” (Kent).

v. 8, παραπικρασμός *parapikrasmos*, embitterment; Heb. Meribah, strife; Num 20:13 (Kadesh); “rebellion” in NIV

πειρασμός *peirasmos*, temptation (NIV “time of testing”); Heb. Massah, temptation; Exod 17:1-7 (at Rephidim)

vv. 9-10, οὗ *hou*, better “where” (ASV) than “when” (KJV)

40 years linked to God’s works; Heb. & LXX link them to God’s anger (as in v. 17)

v. 11, “If” — negative oath; cf. negative oath language in Gen 3:22

Verse in Ps 95:11 quoted from Num 14:28-30 (oath, Num 14:21-23)

Psalm 95:11,
So I declared on oath in my anger,
“They shall never enter my rest.”

Word “rest” added by David

Cf. “rest” in Deut 12:9-10; Josh 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; yet David’s people in Psalm 95 needed “rest”

3:12-19, Warning against apostasy

v. 12, Warning stated

v. 13, The antidote: exhort one another daily; “while it is today” applies Ps 95:7

v. 14, “If we hold firm” (ἐάνπερ *eanper*, strong “if”) — 3rd class conditional sentence, possible-probable, as v. 6

μέτοχοι *metochoi* = 3:1 (ones who share, companions)

vv. 15-19, Bad example of unbelieving Israelites

Note the five questions that follow:

1) v. 16a, “who provoked?”

2) v. 16b (with answer), “were they not the Israelites?”

3) v. 17a, “with whom was he angry?”

4) v. 17b (with answer), “was it not those who sinned?”

5) v. 18 (contains answer), “to whom did he swear?”

v. 15, May go with v. 14, probably with v. 16, γάρ *gar* = “indeed”

Parapikrasmos, embitterment; as in v. 8, picked up in v. 16

v. 16, τίνας *tines*: KJV, indef. pron.; ASV et.al, interr. pron. (with the accent)

“Who made God embittered?”

ἀλλά *alla* = “yea” instead of “but” in this case (as in Jas 2:18)

Joshua and Caleb overlooked in the argument

v. 17, Angry 40 years, quotes Ps 95:10 more precisely

Bodies, carcasses (τὰ κῶλα *ta kola*), in wilderness, Num 14:29; 1 Cor 10:10

vv. 18-19, Unbelief → disobedience → denial of rest

4:1-13, Application of “today” and “rest”

v. 1, Φοβηθῶμεν *phobethomen*, hortatory subjunctive; “Let us fear” placed first in sentence for emphasis; continues the warning

δοκέω *dokeo*: “seem”—KJV, ASV; “be found”—RSV, NEB, NIV

Kent suggests “think,” don’t think you have come short, if you trust only in Christ

Seems more with context to understand “be found”

κατάπαυσις *katapausis*, rest which Christian has, personal rest

Rest, cf. Matt 11:28, I will give you rest (ἀναπαύω *anapauro*)

v. 2, Faith must be mixed with hearing of the gospel

Variant readings:

συγκεκρασμένους *sugkekrasmenous* (acc. pl.), unbelievers not mixed in faith with those who heard (Moses, Joshua, Caleb), did not share their faith, UBS {B}, ERV, ESV

συγκεκρασμένος *sugkekerasmenos* (nom. sg.), the word not being mixed with faith, KJV, ASV, RSV, NASB, NIV, often with footnotes for other readings

vv. 3-5, Believers’ rest available since creation

v. 3, εἰσερχόμεθα *eiserchometha*, present indicative, “we enter”

God’s works, his rest instituted on 7th day; his works are finished

v. 4, Gen 2:2; God’s rest unending in Scripture (no mention of end; cf. Melchizedek in 7:3, where no mention of end is important)

v. 5, Ps 95:11, Israel was excluded from his rest

vv. 6-9, This rest available now

vv. 6-7, Promise still there; only that generation excluded

“As said before” in Hebrews—3:7, 13, 15

v. 8, Joshua

Not “Jesus” as in KJV! (“Jesus” is Greek equivalent for “Joshua”)

Joshua 3 times in NT (Luke 3:29; Acts 7:45; Heb 4:8)

“If Joshua,” εἰ *ei* + aor., with ἄν *an* + impf. = 2nd class condition, contrary to fact

v. 9, Conclusion, we still have an available rest

Don’t think you will fall short (4:1)

σαββατισμός *sabbatismos* (hapax), Sabbath rest

Fits with prior context, v. 4

vv. 10-11, Final warning to enter into rest

v. 10, “the one entering” — possibilities:

- 1) Believer, spiritual rest
- 2) Believer, death (Rev 14:13; cf. Heb 13:7)
- 3) Christ (Owen, Pink, Kent)

v. 11, Remain faithful to death

Kent: 4 types of rest in Hebrews:

- 1) God’s creation rest, 4:4
- 2) Canaan rest, 3:7-19
- 3) Salvation rest, 4:1, 3a, 8-9
- 4) Heaven rest, 4:10-11

vv. 12-13, Warning not to fall away; Christ sees all

v. 12, γάρ *gar*, “for,” because Christ sees you, don’t fall back

Living word — Christ

Or written word — Scripture, cf. Acts 7:38; 1 Pet 1:23, especially a word of judgment

Cf. Luke 2:35, sword pierces heart and reveals heart

Luke 2:35, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

Soul and spirit not necessarily two different essences; cf. “thoughts and intents”

v. 13, Clearly God (or Christ)

τετραχελισμένα *tetrachelismena*, laid bare (at the throat, τράχηλος *trachelos*); hapax in both NT & LXX

πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος *pros hon hemin ho logos*, idiom “with whom we have to reckon”; literally, “to whom the reckoning [is] for us”

3. Christ the superior mediator, 4:14-16

Passage is transitional to next section on the high priest. But it belongs in this section because it picks up the thought of 3:1-6 (note 3:1, high priest).

v. 14, Since Jesus is in heaven, he is more effective mediator

“Jesus the Son of God”—contra Joshua in 4:8 (first use of “Son of God” in Hebrews)

v. 15, Cf. 2:17-18, better mediator because he has shared all our infirmities, without sin

“Tempted,” here and in 2:18

χωρίς *choris*, “apart from” Kent: “none of His temptations arose out of a sinful disposition”; cf. Adam; of course, he never did sin (1 Pet 2:22)

v. 16, Come to Christ when tempted to stray

**Guthrie (p. 121) notes a form of *inclusio* here, with a prologue in Heb 4:14-16 and an epilogue in Heb 10:19-23. Both sections have these points in common:

- 1) Hold the confession
- 2) Draw near to God
- 3) Our great high priest
- 4) Confidence

D. Superiority over Aaron, ch. 5-7

1. Aaron's and Christ's priesthods compared, 5:1-10

a. Aaron's priesthood, 5:1-4

v. 1, Taken from men; appointed in behalf of men

Gifts: grain offerings, drink offerings, fellowship offerings

Sacrifices: bloody offerings (for sins)

v. 2, Able to deal gently

Ignorant; sins of ignorance vs. sins of presumption; cf. Num 15:27-31

He is surrounded by weakness

v. 3, Offer [sacrifice] for people and for himself

Day of Atonement—Lev 16

v. 4, This office not by nature of personal worth, but appointed by God from family of Aaron;
Exod 28, Lev 8

b. Christ's priesthood, 5:5-10

Christ has all the good qualifications, and he lacks the drawbacks, of the Aaronic priests.

vv. 5-6, Appointed by God

Quotes Ps 2:7, messianic king

Psalm 2:7,

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD:
He said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.

Ps 110:4, messianic priest-king, order of Melchizedek

Psalm 110:4,
The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind:
“You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.”

(Melchizedek in the OT only in Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4)

Special appointment: Christ of Judah, not of Levi

vv. 7-8, Ability to sympathize and help, because he suffered and learned obedience

Pronoun in v. 7, verb in v. 8—ὅς . . . ἔμαθεν; *hos . . . emathan*—“who . . . learned”

With requests & supplications & strong crying & tears

Gethsemane: Luke 22:41-44; perhaps the crucifixion itself (Luke 23:14; Mark 15:44 = Matt 27:46; Matt 27:50)

Able to save him from death; probably referring to resurrection (not plot of Satan to kill prematurely; John 10:18)

To learn obedience by experience

vv. 9-10, The perfect high priest

Having been perfected; cf. 2:10

Eternal salvation; theme developed later

Because of his character and accomplishments, therefore designated by God as high priest; contrast with Aaronic priesthood

2. Third warning passage, 5:11 - ch. 6

If ignoring the way of reconciliation to God through the OT priests led to condemnation, to ignore Christ, the greater high priest, is to exclude oneself even more finally from God's salvation.

a. Rebuke for spiritual immaturity, 5:11-14

v. 11, Dull of hearing; cf. 6:12, dull in general

vv. 12-14, Elements of the beginning of the elements of God; cf. 6:1, word of the beginning of Christ

Milk: good in 1 Pet 2:2; bad in 1 Cor 3:2

b. Encouragement to spiritual maturity, 6:1-3

vv. 1-2, The foundation (milk):

Conversion: “Repentance from dead works” (KJV, ESV); “from acts that lead to death” (NIV); cf. 9:14

Faith upon God

Ceremonies: Teaching of baptisms (βαπτισμός, contrasting Jewish and Christian washings); John 3:25-26; Acts 19:1-5

Laying on of hands, Acts 8:17; 19:6

Last days: Resurrection of the dead

Eternal judgment

v. 3, This we will do (future indicative)

If God permits (possible-probable)

c. Folly of apostasy, 6:4-8

Main sentence: “It is impossible . . . for them to be brought back to repentance.”

vv. 4-6, Modified by seven participles; the first five participles state the conditions for the permanent condemnation to exist; the final two participles state the reason for this condemnation. The use of the first five participles is most crucial for the interpretation of this passage.

“For **it is impossible** for the ones once having been enlightened (φωτισθέντας *photisthentas*), and having tasted (γευσάμενους *geusamenous*) the free heavenly gift, and having become (γενηθέντας *genethentas*) partakers of the Holy Spirit,

and having tasted (γευσάμενους *geusamenous*) the good word of God and of the coming age, and having fallen away (παραπεσόντας *parapesontas*), again to renew [them] unto repentance, having crucified again (ἀνασταυροῦντας *anastaurountas*) to themselves the Son of God and having subjected [him] to public exposure (παραδειγματίζοντας *paradeigmatizontas*).” (word-for-word translation)

Conditional use of the participle (all 5 “ifs” must apply)

Wallace prefers adjectival use for all 5 participles: “It is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened . . . and have fallen away.” (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* 633); the resulting meaning is the same.

1) Having been enlightened once (ἅπαξ *hapax*; cf. 10:32, possibly regeneration)

2) Having tasted the heavenly gift

Taste, Acts 10:10; Heb 2:9

Heavenly gift, Christ, John 4:10

3) Having shared in the Holy Spirit (3:1, 14; cf. Matt 7:22-23)

4) Having tasted the word of God and the powers of the coming age

Word of God, 1 Pet 1:25; 2:3

Powers, Heb 2:4

5) Having fallen away (παραπέσοντας *parapesontas*)

LXX of Ezek 18:24; 20:27

Complete and final repudiation, Heb 10:26-27

Result: impossible . . . to renew unto repentance (infinitive)

Reason: the final two participles:

- “Crucifying up to themselves the Son of God”
- “And making a public exposure (of him)”

Expose to public ridicule; cf. Num 25:4, public hanging

4 views of this passage (cf. Kent, 111-14):

(1) Arminian view: saved persons who are subsequently lost

Problems with other passages: e.g., Heb 7:25; 8:12; 10:14

Big problem: impossible to renew—goes against Arminian doctrine

(2) Christian chastisement view: saved persons who backslide

As in 1 Cor 11:30

Reduces severity of penalty; refers to inability to “start over again” or undo harm that was done; may refer to physical death

(3) Traditional Reformed view: professed believers who are not actually regenerated and do not persevere

Similar to rocky ground in Matt 13:20-21

(Note application to covenant children—danger of falling away; responsibility)

Problems:

Seems to weaken the force of the first four participles

Indicates cannot be saved later

Yet this view seems appealing, and in harmony with other Scriptures and with experience

Good argument for traditional view – OT parallel of Israelites in wilderness (experience blessing of being in covenant community without personal faith; came under the curses of the covenant); see Dave Mathewson, “Reading Hebrews 6:4-6 in the Light of the Old Testament,” *WTJ* 61:2 (Fall, 1999) 209-25.

Note: we cannot judge individual cases

(4) Hypothetical view: true Christians who would depart from the faith (if that were possible) (cf. Guthrie)

Recognizes force of all five participles without reducing any

Hypothetical aspect still useful, shows logical results of ideas or trends, were they to go unchecked (cf. 6:9); used for warning

Kent offers also as hypothetical Jas 2:10; another passage would be the first verses of 1 Cor 13

vv. 7-8, Illustration of good vs. bad ground

Fits with Jesus' parable (see view #3 above)

d. Encouragement to faithfulness, 6:9-20

vv. 9-10, Confidence in the Hebrew Christians

εἰ *ei*, “if, since, although,” concessive clause (“although”)

vv. 11-12, Encouragement to persevere

v. 12, νωθροί *nothroi*, cf. 5:11, “lazy”

Follow mature Christians (13:7, 17)

Now inheriting the promises

vv. 13-18a, God's sure promise, the incentive to persevere

vv. 13-14, Quote from Gen 22:16-17 (note literal infinitive absolute; εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω *eulogon eulogeso*, “blessing I will bless”)

Promise to Abraham in Gen 12, 15, 17 (e.g., covenant ritual in Gen 15)

v. 15, Abraham obtained the promise, contra 11:13
birth of Isaac? Mt. Moriah? cf. John 8:56

vv. 16-18a, God's sure oath (Gen 22:16)

v. 16, Men's oaths

v. 17, God's oath; μεσιτεύω *mesiteuo*, “confirm, guarantee,” not ASV
“interpose”

v. 18, Purpose of God's oath and promise

vv. 18b-20, Figures of Christ's dependability

v. 18, City of refuge (Num 35; Deut 4:42 LXX; Josh 20:9)

v. 19, Anchor

On the other side of the veil; firm spot for anchor (mixed metaphor)

v. 20, Forerunner

Unlike OT priests, he enables us eventually to enter holy of holies

Melchizedek brings back to 5:10, before warning; and it leads to next section

3. The order of Melchizedek, ch. 7

[For relevant fragments found among DSS, Cave 11, see M. de Jonge and A. S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the NT," *NTS* 12 (1966) 301-26 (referred to by Guthrie, *TNTC*, p. 40, n. 2).]

a. General description of Melchizedek, vv. 1-3

Taken from Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4 (earlier references in Hebrews – 5:6, 10; 6:20)

v. 1, Name Melchizedek, Heb. מֶלְכִי צְדָק *malki tsedeq*; lit "my king is righteous"; *tsedeq* ("righteous") a common part of names of kings in Jerusalem, cf. Josh 10:1 (Adoni-Zedek, "my lord is righteous"), perhaps a dynastic title.

Salem, שָׁלֵם *shalem* = Jerusalem (Ps 76:2; parallel: Salem = Zion); related to "peace"

Priest of most high God

Met Abraham; blessed Abraham

v. 2, Abraham tithed to Melchizedek

Interpretation of names

v. 3, No father, mother, genealogy, beginning or end

Refers to biblical record, not person himself

Not a theophany: similar to the Son of God

“Remains a high priest forever,” cf. v. 8, testified that he lives

Reasons for not being a theophany:

- 1) “Resemble” in v. 3
- 2) Ps 110:4 and Heb 7, “after the order of Melchizedek” differentiates the two
- 3) Melchizedek had permanent position and residence; theophanies are temporary manifestations
- 4) Name common; cf. Josh 10:1, “Lord of Righteousness,” but wicked
- 5) Without father, etc.; still remains as far as text is concerned; cf. Heb 4:4 quoting Gen 2:2, no end of 7th day recorded, “evening and morning”

[The following order of notes is not entirely in the biblical order. Verses are arranged more topically.]

b. Melchizedek’s order superior to Levi’s, vv. 4-28

(1) Superior in tithes, vv. 4-6a, 8-10

v. 9, ἔπος *epos* (“word”); ὡς ἔπος λέγειν *hos epos legein* (lit. “as a word to say”); “to qualify speech that might sound too assertive *so to speak, one might almost say*; or perh. to effect a climax *to use just the right word*” (BDAG 388); NIV and ESV “one might even say”

(2) Superior in blessing, vv. 6b-7

Blesses God and Abraham; bread and wine, cf. the Lord’s Supper and the institution of the new covenant

(3) Superior in foundation, vv. 11-19

Levi built on law of Moses

Christ & Melchizedek, foundation on power of life

v. 16, σάρκινος *sarkinos*, fleshy, physical

Cf. σαρκικός *sarkikos*, fleshly, sinful (1 Cor 3:3; v. 1 uses *sarkinos*)

No perfection possible via Levi (vv. 11, 18-19a)

Melchizedek order can bring perfection (vv. 11, 19b)

(4) Superior in ordination, vv. 20-22

v. 22, “To the same degree” (KJV “by so much”); cf. v. 20 “to the degree” (KJV “and inasmuch”)

v. 22, ἔγγυος *enguos*, “guarantor” (better than “mediator”)

Note διαθήκη *diatheke* (17 times in Hebrews; cf. *TDNT*), “will” or “testament” in 9:16-17; otherwise “covenant” in rest of Hebrews

(5) Superior in unchangeableness, vv. 23-25

v. 24, ἀπαράβατος *aparabatos*, *on* (hapax; masc. & fem.); NIV “permanent”

Without successor? Not according to usage. Better: “permanent, unchangeable” (BDAG 97); an unchangeable priesthood

(6) Superior in perfection, vv. 26-28